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The present dilemma of Boston's public school system is caused by the students' poor reading and arithmetic achievement, a lack of modern building and material facilities, unrealistic faculty promotion policies, racial controversies, and a lack of cooperation between agencies and personnel serving the schools. Studies revealed that Boston students begin their school careers with better than average skills, but by fourth grade the averages drop below the national figure and continue to decline. New ideas and programs should begin in the Boston school department headquarters.

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THE DILEMMA OF BOSTON SCHOOLS

The declining state of public education in Boston and the challenge facing the school administration.

by

ROBERT LEVEY

Boston Globe Reporter

Office of Education-EEOP

Research and Materials Branch — Bennett O. Stalvey

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The Dilemma of Boston's Schools--I

The Nation's Best on the Skids

Boston's schools, once the nation's finest, are in very serious decline. Facts and figures provided by school authorities give a depressing picture of present conditions.

But there are also signs of a new rise. Steps taken recently show a will to improve and ability to do the job.

Globe reporter Robert L. Levey, who wrote the series, has covered the School Department for the past two years.

The public school system in Boston is in crucial need of reconditioning.

The administrators of the systems are supervising a stumbling giant of noble lineage. They and the elected School Committee oversee the nation's oldest and New England's largest public school plant.

LEVEY

But despite the impressive history, the days of unchallenged excellence and educational leadership are over in Boston.

Like many other urban centers in this nation, Boston has a public school system that has years of catching up to do if it is to provide maximum education for its students.

Boston schools serve 94,000 students, 10 percent of the public school enrollment in the commonwealth. But the following statistics and facts, provided by school officials, show that Boston children get an uneven break from their public education system.

There are glaring shortcomings.

—The school plant itself is inadequate and antiquated. The school building program, under last year's $29 million bond issue, is creeping along at a painfully slow clip.

—There are no school libraries in the 175 elementary and junior high schools.

—School Dept. records show that Boston students score badly on nationally standardized tests. Students at only three of the city's 16 high schools score above average as a group.

—Guidance and pupil adjustment functions are desperately understaffed. Until last year, just 10 pupil adjustment counselors covered 17 junior high and 158 elementary schools. That comes to one counselor for every 3500 students. This staff has been doubled, but it still leaves each counselor with more than 4000 students.

Both vocational and college preparatory students receive perfunctory guidance services —usually one brief interview during their high school career.

—Members of the Board of Superintendents admit that progress has been slow in recent years. Some factors contributing to the slowdown are the small size of the top echelon administration, the inbred and complacent nature of past administrations and the rating system for promotion.

—The program for vocational training has long needed a major reformation, both in physical facilities and in development of curricula and guidance techniques that will provide better skills and a better future for students.

—There is also the responsibility to serve the large body of "culturally disadvantaged students," who begin their education on almost an equal footing but, according to School Dept. information, drop in achievement year after year until hope for higher education is obliterated.

—Along with these instructional and administrative problems is the question of financing. The mayor controls the budget and unless he gets relief in the form of a revised state aid formula, a breakthrough is impossible. Boston is caught in an archaic stranglehold that sees just 8 percent of the school budget returned to municipal coffers through state aid. The national average is 40 percent.

The decreasing city population, the rush to the suburbs, is in great part a reflection of the lack of faith held in the schools of this city of 700,000 souls.

For schools are in the forefront of the minds of parents. They generally want to see their children go to college or technical school.

But of the graduating class of 1963 in Boston, only one in four was enrolled at a four-year degree-granting college.

Of 3513 graduates, 891 went on to degree-granting colleges and 627 of this number came from just four of the 16 high schools — Boys' and Girls' Latin, English, and Technical.

District high school students are fenced in that smothering grey area of "general course" with neither vocational training in their past nor college in their future. They enter the jobs market with no skills.

Office of Education
Research and Materials Branch

As for college, of 2402 graduates from the 12 vocational and district high schools—excluding the four comprehensive high schools mentioned above—only 264 matriculated to regular degree-granting colleges, less than 11 percent.

Supt. Ohrenberger himself decries the general course—into which most of the district high school students are funneled.

"The general course should not be a course that is elected by the student," he says, "from the first day I took office I have wanted to eliminate it."

Ohrenberger knows well of the increasing educational demands which accompany both job and college opportunities for Boston high school graduates. He is braced for a long battle to change some of the city's long-standing public schools traditions.

This hope of Supt. Ohrenberger will take more effort than one might imagine.

As one of the most vocal critics of Boston public education puts it, "the most stultifying aspect of this school system is that the administration acts as if there are no fundamental problems."

This is the conclusion of Herbert Gleason, a Boston attorney who heads a civic group, the Citizens for Boston Public Schools.

The group has been attempting to take the role of catalyst for educational improvement in Boston by watching, researching and commenting on the operation of the school system.

Says Gleason: "There is an intense desire from civic and other outside groups to help, but because of the defensiveness of the school administration, any criticism is taken as criticism of itself. The administration deprives itself of sympathetic help."

On the other hand, since Ohrenberger has taken office he has attracted growing support for what amounts to "an open door policy."

Ohrenberger and some of his assistant superintendents admit that there was in recent decades something which amounted to a self-satisfied pause in man yareas of Boston public education.

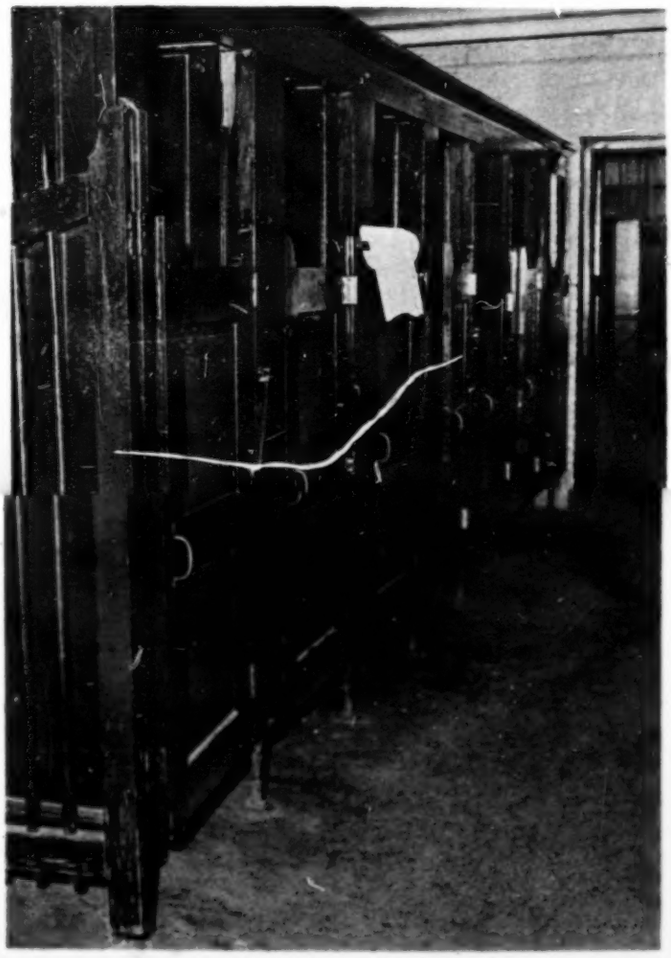
There was a profound resistance to cooperation with outside institutions in educational research, teacher recruitment, curriculum reform and the like.

This is changing.

After years of caution and resistance, Boston has entered into an agreement with the Harvard Graduate School of Education to open the doors of the system to experimental programs in urban education. The project is a major one.

Ohrenberger

"An open door policy" has been initiated by Supt. William Ohrenberger to get Boston public education moving again.



One of the Problems

Old physical facilities contribute to the problems of public education in Boston. Here is an ancient girls' toilet at the Everett School in Roxbury.

Dilemma of Boston Schools—II

Reading Below Standards

By ROBERT L. LEVEY
Education Reporter

Boston students begin their school careers with better-than-average ability in reading and arithmetic—but by the fourth grade the city-wide averages drop below national figures and by high school, they are left far behind.

Tenth grade students score at a percentile median of 35 on standardized reading tests. This is 15 points below the national average.

Arithmetic scoring is just as bad.

The ninth grade percentile median is 37, well below the national norm of 50.

These facts are revealed in School Department statistics on performance of Boston pupils taking achievement tests that were given throughout the country.

Traditionally, northeastern towns and cities perform better than most southern or midwestern communities.

In fact, it is common for suburban towns in Greater Boston to report reading percentile medians at levels of 80 or above.

A startling aspect of low reading achievment in Boston is the pattern of declining proficiency as you go up through the grades.

In Grade 2, the city-wide reading level last year was 2.5 (This represents second grade level plus five months.) The level is five months ahead of national norms.

Grade 3 average is 3.1, or one month ahead of norms.

Grade 4 level is 3.9, one month behind and by Grade 6, the city average is 5.6, or four months behind.

In junior high school things become much worse. Until last year there was effectively no provision for remedial or developmental reading once a child left elementary school.

If a child entered junior high school with poor reading skills, he was doomed. There was no avenue for reading help. By the time high school rolled around the average student was way behind.

A minor push has been made by the school administration to extend developmental reading in the junior high schools. Teachers are being asked to give more time to the teaching of reading, where previously no formal reading instruction existed in junior high.

But the current effort barely scratches the surface of the problem.

A detailed look at high school reading levels shows the magnitude of the problem.

There are 16 high schools in the city. Only Boys' and Girls' Latin schools show well with 80 and 75 percentile medians.

Remembering that 50 would be average performances for a group comparing it nationally look at the next three highest:

Boston Technical	56
Boston English	45
Hyde Park High	43

Now take a look at some of the low ones:

Brighton	26
Dorchester	25
Girl's Trade	24
Jamaica Plain High	20
Girl's High	20
South Boston High	19
Boston Trade	10

The balance of the schools fall between 35 and 40.

One eminently clear assumption that can be gleaned from these figures is that the large mass of youngsters, who go to the city's district high schools, have not achieved even average reading skill in the Boston schools.

In fact in only 10 of the city's 16 high schools does the top quarter of the class read above average.

The status of arithmetic skills is about the same. The Grade 9 arithmetic percentile median is 37 and if you exclude the Latin schools, it drops to 26.

As in the case of the reading scores, this puts the median arithmetic skill of a student leaving a Boston junior high school way below average performance by an American student group.

And these national averages include low performance rural groups and groups from the vast slums of larger American cities.

The key to any eventual solution to the low achievement scoring can be spelled out simply . . . Remedial Programs.

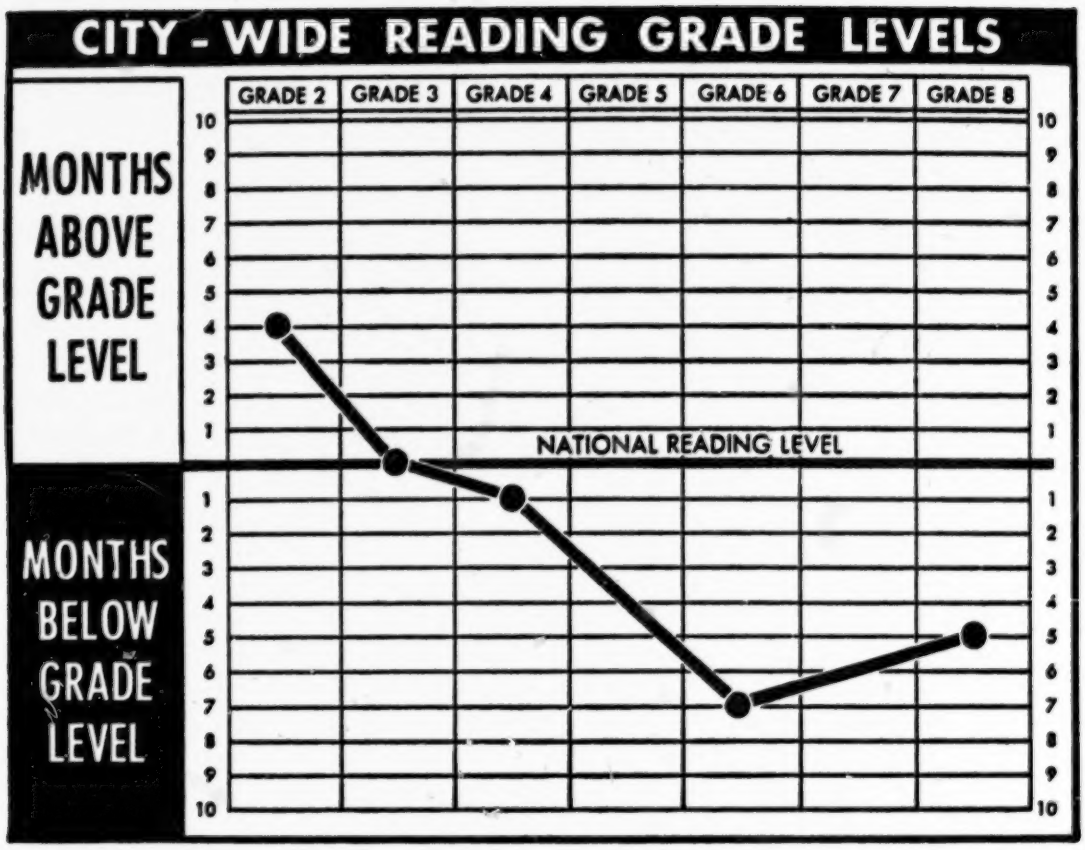
This is an area in which the school system has been lax throughout its history.

Take for instance the lowest scoring group of elementary schools in the city. The School Dept. calls this selection of 18 districts "Group I" on its comparative reading statistics.

Second grade students in "Group I" score above grade level in reading, yet by Grade 3 they have fallen well below third grade reading level.

This is a disaster from which many can never recover. Even if there were remedial reading programs that touched all students in need, this kind of radical drop in achievement is a serious and tragic blow.

You might say that this is no tragedy. But a new book by Benjamin Bloom, education professor at University of Chi-



cago, points out that by the time children finish third grade, they have reached at least half of the general level of achievement they will attain as high school seniors.

His study, "Stability and Change in Human Characteristics," adds: "All subsequent learning in the school is affected and, in large part, determined by what the child has learned by the age of 9."

By not responding more fully to the needs of the poorer children of this or any city, school officials are directly contributing to the perpetuation of their poverty and lack of skills.

In Boston the first real gestures to address this problem have come very late—just in the last two years.

These efforts are:

1—"Operation Counterpoise," which aims at reducing class size, reducing truancy, increasing supervision and providing pupil counseling; and

2—Action for Boston Community Development, the Ford Foundation-School Dept.-Boston Redevolpment Authority program, which is essentially an experimental project touching the schools in the areas of guidance and remediation.

Public education, it must be remembered, has always been something of a class conscious affair. As in most areas of endeavor, poor people and racially different people have traditionally been asked to perform under standards of the dominant middle-class.

The proper selection and analysis of the annual achievement tests is essential to development of methods to counter the low achievement pattern.

This has been impossible in Boston. For one thing, most of the school administration has been feuding for years with the director of the Division of Investigation and Measurement, directed by Miss Mary B. Cummings.

Intelligence ratios, or group I. Q tests, given annually in Boston have NEVER been compiled by district or city-wide for use by school administrators.

When an assistant superintendent has wanted such information, he has had to do the work himself. The School Department's designated office for such work does not do it.

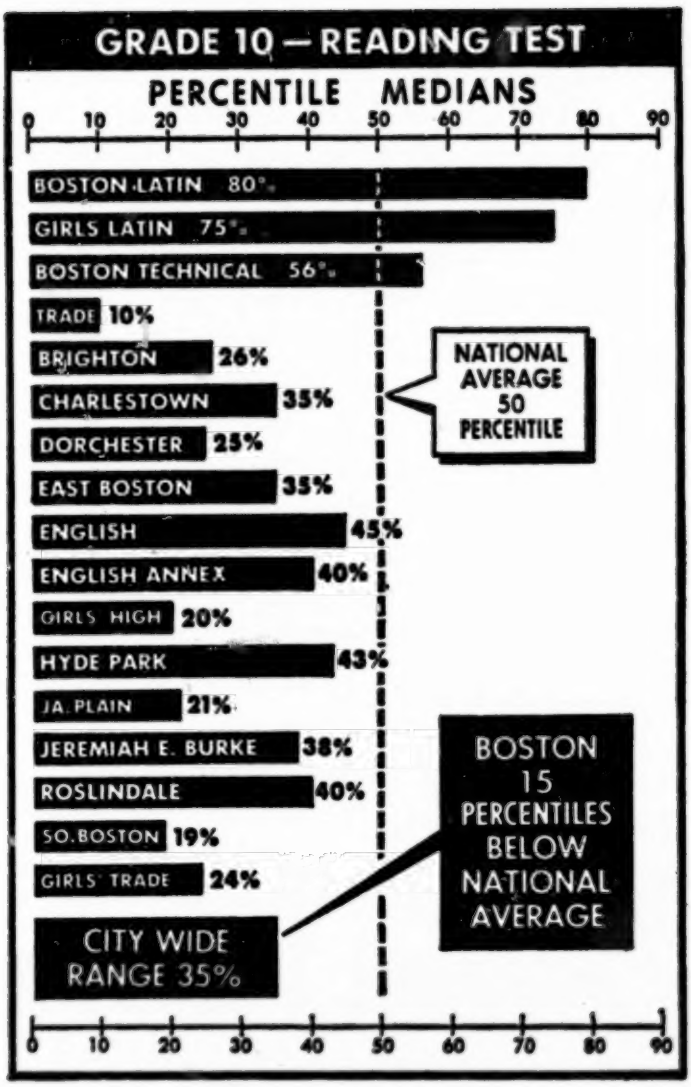
Miss Cummings says she has too little help. The division employs 10 research assistants, who give tests and eight secretarial personnel.

There is basis to Miss Cummings' claim of inadequate staff. Last year the division fell 2000 behind in requests for individual I.Q. tests of students. These were never administered and the backlog this year has already reached 2200.

Deputy Supt. Marguerite Sullivan, who heads elementary education, says that the administration is now moving on these problems.

She and Supt. William Ohrenberger admit that there are real vacancies in the areas of testing and evaluation, as well as remedial programs.

The poor achievement of Boston students on basic achievement tests is a symptom. It is an alarm.


GRADE 10 — READING TEST
PERCENTILE MEDIANS
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90
BOSTON LATIN 80%
GIRLS LATIN 75%
BOSTON TECHNICAL 56%
TRADE 10%
BRIGHTON 26%
CHARLESTOWN 35%
DORCHESTER 25%
EAST BOSTON 35%
ENGLISH 45%
ENGLISH ANNEX 40%
GIRLS HIGH 20%
HYDE PARK 43%
JA. PLAIN 21%
JEREMIAH E. BURKE 38%
ROSLINDALE 40%
SO. BOSTON 19%
GIRLS' TRADE 24%
CITY WIDE RANGE 35%
NATIONAL AVERAGE 50 PERCENTILE
BOSTON 15 PERCENTILES BELOW NATIONAL AVERAGE
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90

Dilemma of Boston Public Schools—III

Construction? There Is None

By ROBERT L. LEVEY

The school building program in Boston is progressing with all the deliberate speed of a glacier.

Until 1962, there was no such thing as a building program for Boston public schools. The school plant (of almost 200 buildings) was then, and remains, generally antiquated.

With completion of the Sargent Report on school buildings, and the subsequent capital improvements program of former School Supt. Frederick Gillis, the building program took some direction.

Then came the $29 million appropriation for school construction from Mayor Collins and the City Council.

But this well-financed hope for a comprehensive building program has turned sour. It has become stymied for want of a piece of land on which to build the new English High School.

Supt. William Ohrenberger has appropriately called the new English High School the "keystone" of the over-all program to update school facilities.

Construction of the high school will alleviate considerable crowding at existing schools throughout the city. The whole first stage of the building program is more or less predicated on relieving crowding in high schools and junior highs.

In essence, the building program remains hopelessly tangled without the new English High School as an early step.

But the progress of site selection for the large school has deteriorated into a protracted political nightmare.

Mayor Collins, as guardian and builder of a sound tax base, is staunchly opposed to building the school on a site that might otherwise create substantial tax revenue.

For this reason, he has already vetoed taking of a Columbia Point site, which is to be developed as a large shopping center.

With the mayor's veto power over land-taking, school officials must keep suggesting new site proposals until he approves one.

Ohrenberger regards the new English High School hassle as his major headache.

"The progress of our building plans amounts to a checker game," he says. Unfortunately, English High is the first move in the game and for five years has remained glued to the board.

Ohrenberger today admits he's at wit's end. It seems sure now a new English High School is at least five years off.

And this is only one of the impasses facing the building program.

The basic difficulty is the inhibiting separation of the Boston School Department and the School Buildings Commission.

The commission, which controls the School Buildings Department, is an independent agency to which the School Department must go in order to get schools either repaired or constructed.

Both Ohrenberger and his chief structural engineer, Anthony Galeota, have constantly charged maintenance, planning and construction of school buildings is slowed under the control of the School Buildings Department.

Its concern is so great the school administration annually files legislation on Beacon Hill trying to have the School Buildings Department abolished. The bill fails annually. It is being filed again this year.

The school administration's criticism of the School Buildings Department touches on big projects like drawing up plans for a school and small projects like ordering a simple partition for an office.

Ohrenberger points out when he took office a year and a half ago he wanted to rearrange some office space in the school headquarters at 15 Beacon st. He's still waiting for a partition he ordered.

He and Galeota are steaming over the sorry state of the painting program. "At least 35 of our schools need complete repainting right now," they say. "Under the present funds, we'd never catch up with the painting."

The School Buildings Department is allowed, under a 1949 formula, about $2.4 million for school repairs. This budget was cut to $1.8 million last year. Galeota says repair costs have doubled since 1949, but the old budget is being cut back and the buildings department doesn't even spend what they have."

School officials include Mayor Collins in their criticism of the School Buildings Department. They say the department answers to the mayor, and keeps spending down on his behalf.

The three-member buildings commission is appointed by the mayor and the School Committee.

Collins denies he has limited the committee. In fact, he says he has done more for education in Boston than any mayor in this century.

He points to the $29 million for school buildings and the creation of the Action for Boston Community Development programs, which center a great deal of activity in the schools.

But Mayor Collins himself admits the exisitng School Buildings Department is something less than a crackerjack agency.

With plans for a vast building program supposedly under way, it would seem a new arrangement for conducting the program is critically necessary.

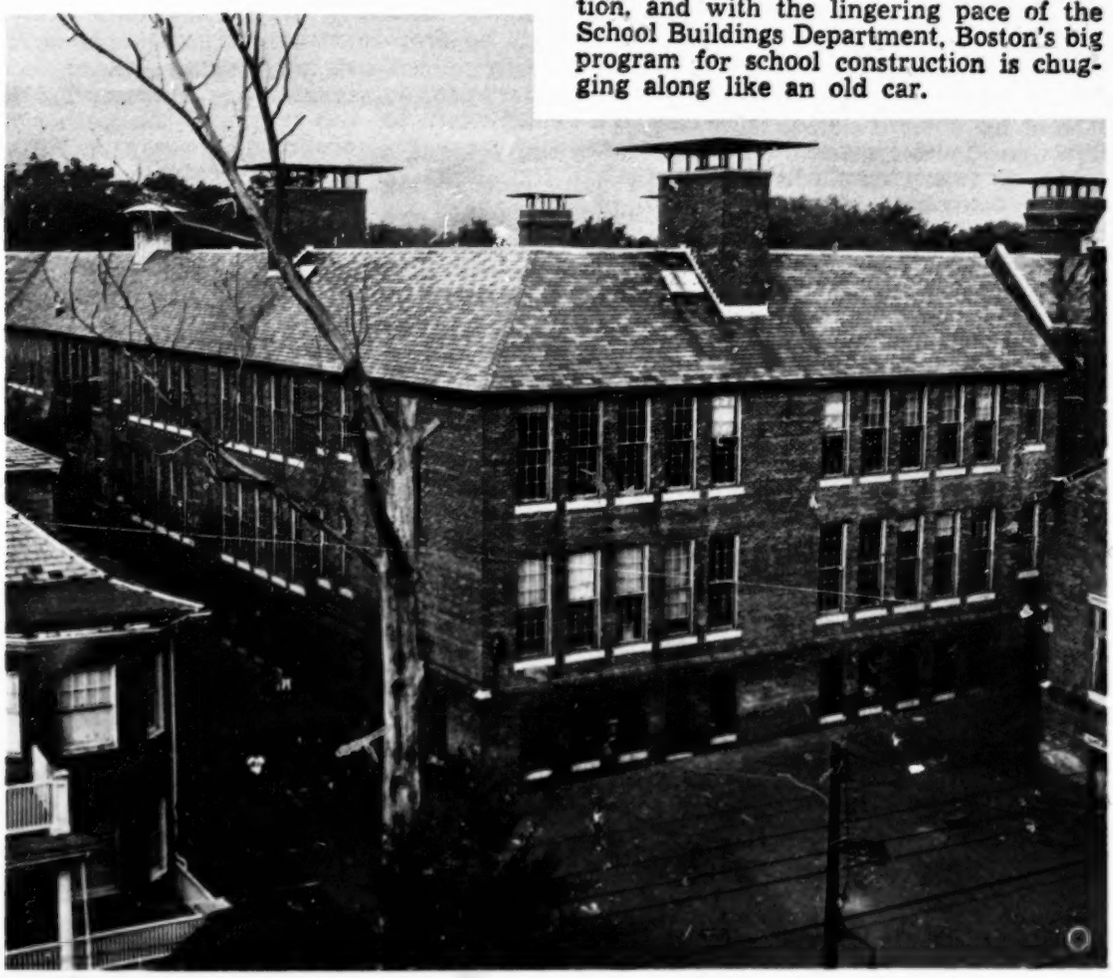
Since publication of the Harvard Study and the superintendent's capital improvement program in 1962, six elementary schools have been built or expanded.

Two were complete schools in Charlestown and Jamaica Plain. Four were additions to existing schools — two in Hyde Park, one in Jamaica Plain, and one in West Roxbury.

And despite the available $29 million, only five schools or additions are presently in the planning stage—two in Dorchester, one in Brighton, one in Roxbury and additions to English High School.

Only 55 actual classrooms have been created since the Harvard Study. These accommodate 2200 pupils, but more than 1000 pupil places were removed in the process.

With the new English High School plans bound up in a battle over a site location, and with the lingering pace of the School Buildings Department, Boston's big program for school construction is chugging along like an old car.



GARRISON SCHOOL in Roxbury, figured in a controversy over the transfer of pupils to the Boardman School, an older and more antiquated structure. Such problems would be alleviated if a building program gathered momentum.

Old Fashioned Rules Discourage Young Teachers

DILEMMA OF BOSTON SCHOOLS—IV

By ROBERT L. LEVEY
Education Reporter

A variety of Victorian rules are working against progress in Boston public education.

There is an inflexible, up-from-the-ranks system of promotion which is weighted heavily toward years of service and which works to discourage young, talented teachers from staying in Boston.

- No male teacher may teach below the fourth grade.
- The top echelon administration is too small and is kept that way by state law.
- The parent-teacher groups are an official arm of the school department and are forbidden by their rules to criticize the school system.
- There is heavy emphasis on strict discipline of the "hands folded and backs straight" variety—and there is still the rattan.
- The School Committee is elected as a body, leaving the possibility of a completely inexperienced five-man slate taking office at one time. Supt. William Ohrenberger himself believes that staggered terms for committee members would be an improvement.

These are some of the problems that stand in the path of progress for Boston public education.

Most are questions of administrative or committee policy that could be changed with a single vote.

Probably the most glaring example of administrative rigidity is represented by the method of rating and promoting people within the system.

The first requirement to rate for a promotion to assistant principal, supervisor or director, assistant headmaster, is six years teaching experience in Boston schools.

The candidate must also receive an A-1 rating at the end of three consecutive two-year periods.

Principals, who do the marking, are only allowed to give A-1 ratings to 15 percent of the teachers in their schools or districts. Even if the principal feels that more teachers deserve a top rating he cannot give it.

In such a case, the principal must decide on the basis of seniority who shall be rated A-1 and who shall be dropped to a lower rating.

There are no exceptions to this rule. If a person wants to be a guidance counselor, the essential requirements are six years of teaching in this city and three A-1 ratings.

The School Department is now planning to add a new person in the field of public relations. The person should have a master's degree, news or public relations experience AND, because of the rating system, at least six teaching years in Boston and three A-1 ratings.

Many Boston teachers find the rating system undesirable. One former teacher summed it up with the word "brutal."

At the other end of the rating spectrum is the question of bad teachers. Because of tenure laws, a teacher who gets through three years as a permanently appointed member of the staff is protected from dismissal—except on grounds of incompetence.

There has almost never been a firing of a tenure teacher in recent history. Under the leadership of Ohrenberger and Asst. Supt. John Canty, who heads personnel and rating, this important area is being reviewed.

Last year, 12 teachers were dismissed just prior to gaining tenure. And this year the administration has begun to take a look at a small number of teachers who have been receiving low ratings for years.

Ohrenberger has made strong gestures toward modernizing administration. He has revamped the teacher recruitment program in an effort to compete favorably with the large network of Greater Boston suburbs.

Until Ohrenberger's term, Boston neglected the search for teachers. The administration sat back and waited for teachers to apply. This eventually created a dilemma. There was widespread assignment of teachers who did not hold certificates in the courses they were teaching.

This year, for the first time, a recruiting team has made the rounds of colleges inviting graduating students to take the teachers' examination in Boston.

The effort has already resulted in a record number of applications for this year's exam.

(It should be noted, though, that because of the shortage of special class teachers and adequate class space, about 500 Boston students who should be in special classes are regularly enrolled.)

Racial Dispute Has Created Some Progress

The Dilemma of Boston's Schools - V

By ROBERT L. LEVEY
Education Reporter

Though the racial controversy in the Boston schools never has been resolved officially, it has had enormous positive impact on the course of public education.

The Negro leaders who came before the Boston School Committee with an outline of educational demands did something that the school administration had been unwilling to do.

They opened the eyes of city school officials to the most pressing problems they face—the urban challenge.

The terms of the challenge are simple:

—To tailor educational programs to the individual needs of the student.

—To compensate through education for the detrimental impact tenement living and poverty have on children.

—To diversify secondary education properly so that each student is seriously guided toward college or work.

Boston school officials have been awakened to this need, not just for the Negro population of the city, but for all students.

And this awakening was hastened by the strong protest from the Negro community.

This city has yet to institute major alterations in curricula and guidance, but for the first time in memory the school administration is admittting chinks in the educational armor.

Supt. William Ohrenberger can be given credit for these positive stirrings. "Mistakes made in the past by the Boston school system," he says, "have been mistakes of omission not mistakes of commission."

For many years the school administration has known that achievement of students in the poorer districts, both white and Negro, has been much lower than the city average.

But rather than attacking the situation vigorously the low achievement has been accepted as a fact and ignored.

Though the "de facto segregation" issue deteriorated into a hostile dispute between the School Committee and Negro leadership, it was essentially a protest by a body of Boston parents against the school administration's neglect of the needs of a great number of Boston students.

It wasn't so much that the school administration was doing anything different. It was that it had not adjusted to change.

Dr. Harold Taylor, former Sarah Lawrence College president and a renowned educator, says "it is no longer permissible to say that the social environment of the child is not the problem of the educator, that it belongs to city planners, social workers, economists, housing experts or society. It belongs to everyone, but most of all to the educator."

During the racial controversy in Boston, the School Committee and administration virtually denied that it need regard the social environment of school children.

Today, sixth grade children in many Roxbury schools are as much as three years behind the reading levels of students in some of the more prosperous sections of the city.

These same children were average performers in the second grade, but fell behind more and more each year.

To address the problem of the culturally disadvantaged student properly, the school administration must not only plan new programs, add new staff, increase the budget and build new schools.

It must develop a flexible, searching approach to education and must make changes when it finds that students aren't profiting from their school experience.

In other words, it must start blaming itself, rather than defending itself.

Boston is a city of change today. As a vital fiber in the municipal fabric, the school system must be part of the change.

★ *SCHOOLS*

Continued

Ohrenberger is also trying to expand the top administration to realistic size. He has filed legislation to this effect.

"The size of my Board of Superintendents is described by law," says Ohrenberger. "What other community in the state can say that? We're up against the wall."

Even more important, the size of the school budget is limited by law.

"Are we the only community that has to be watched?" Ohrenberger asks.

Ohrenberger plans to keep fighting to remove these two limitations. At the same time there are many limitations built into the school system that he might also review.

SCHOOLS

Continued

Even Dr. James Bryant Conant, former Harvard president and famed investigator of American public education, has done an about face on the problem of educating the Negro population of large cities.

Just three years ago, in his book, "Slums and Suburbs," Dr. Conant ignored the question of racially imbalanced education.

His newest book, "Shaping Educational Policy," goes beyond a reform in instruction and calls on the state to press for the integration of public schools through "radical redistricting of school lines, and as a last resort busing of children.

Though Ohrenberger and the School Committee still stand firm against responding to Negro demands to redistrict school lines, bus children or admit segregated school patterns, they are making efforts which ultimately will improve education in all poorer areas of the city.

It is unfortunate and contradictory that he is making these changes while still denying many charges of Negro leaders.

If there is any prescription to be recommended, it would have to be a magic potion that has not been discovered.

It would have to salve the suspicions and short tempers of both the School Committee and the petitioning Negro group.

It would have to produce more teachers, more money to pay them, more guidance and more remedial training.

But the future is not totally bleak. Both the A.B.C.D. programs and the coming Harvard center for urban school studies are experimentaaly aimed at finding the most effective and practical methods of dealing with the declining performance of racially or economically different youngsters.

The big test will come when the school administration is faced with the challenge of large-scale adoption of expensive, new programs that are proved valuable in such experimental ventures.

Today, the majority of Boston's School Committee and Supt. Ohrenberger do not believe that the school system is at fault for the low educational achievement in poor sections, particularly Roxbury.

And since this seems like their earnest belief, they see no reason to make any radical changes.

If this basic reluctance continues, the lingering problems of Boston's culturally disadvantaged students will also continue.

The Dilemma of Boston Schools—VI

Hub System Demands Pioneers

By ROBERT L. LEVEY
Education Reporter

There is a bruising and costly battle ahead if the New Boston is to have a new school system.

The reformation must begin with new ideas and programs. Here the burden of responsibility falls to Supt. of Schools William Ohrenberger, his Board of Superintendents and the fiive-member School Committee.

But the mayor of Boston holds the final fiscal authority and unless the school officials can build a strong case of change, and the cost of change, the major can block the road.

The mayor, in turn, must look to the state to ease the burden of cost through a drastic revision of the archaic state aid formula that returns a pittance to the city today.

At the heart of the matter is the need for widespread concern by elected and administrative officials over the educational future of the 10 percent of the commonwealth's public school students in Boston.

If this concern can be generated, Boston school officials can start moving on some of the drastic revisions that can uplift public school education and in turn produce a student body that is better educated and better prepared for college or work.

Even with the outside restrictions which inhibit the administrative operation of the schools, any real cycle of change must begin at 15 Beacon st. i the School Department headquarters.

Here is a prime example. The length of the school week in Boston is 1650 minutes—1375 of these minutes are teaching time.

A STRONG SUPERINTENDENT and school committee can put Boston back on a sound educational track. Supt. William Ohrenberger (above) has shown signs he is willing to wade in and fight for long needed improvements.

The State Dept. of Education recommends that teaching time should be 1650 minutes. The difference amounts to 14 full teaching days a year.

Ohrenberger and Deputy Superintendent Marguerite Sullivan both say that the shorter school day in Boston is a thorn in the side of progress.

They say that reading and arithmetic achievement could be raised if the school day were lengthened.

If Ohrenberger and Miss Sulivan translated their concern on this point into a strong recommendation to the School Committee, the school day could be lengthened by a majority vote.

In the gut area of guidance, expansion of the present limited set-up would involve Ohrenberger and the School Committee's strong endorsement of increased staff and procedure. This would lead to a fight with Mayor Collins over providing funds for such a change.

The expansion of vocational education, which Ohrenberger has asked state authorities to review, would necessitate a long, complicated struggle for new physical facilities and modern programs.

The opening up of the present closed system of promotion and advancement by teachers could be pushed by the superintendent and School Comittee, if they so desired.

To penetrate the problem of the stalled building program, school officials and the mayor would have to join hands in finding methods and legislative suport to restructure the School Building Dept. This, too, would involve a tough fight.

This is just a sampling of areas where reform is needed. If Ohrenberger matches his voiced intentions with a hard line of basic reform in the forum of the School Committee, the pattern of stale administration can be broken.

He and the committee will also have to engage Mayor Collins in a progressive dialogue that will result in giving the kind of priority to educational renewal that the

physical and economic renewal of the city has been given. Ohrenberger has already shown that he can make swift changes. In the vital area of teacher recruitment, he has made dramatic and positive alterations that brought 1800 registrations for the teachers' exam this year . . . hundreds more than in previous years.

He has sent a recruiting team to colleges around and outside of Boston. It was the first time the school administration ever went looking for teachers.

In most cases, what stands between drastic change and complacency is an outdated approach to running an urban school system.

Ohrenberger, unlike his predecessors, has been willing to mention the unmentionable — some of the bad things about Boston schools.

He has fully admitted that a long road is ahead to improve a variety of crucial areas. But he has taken the edge off his criticism too often by throwing the blame down to City Hall or up to the State House.

But Boston education needs a reformation, not a confession.

Because of the patchwork structure that directly or indirectly guides Boston education, everyone has been able to blame everyone else.

As one of the major redevelopment cities in America, Boston should be particularly sensitive to the needs for the best possible school system.

All the visionary plans for modern dwellings at all economic levels in a redesigned New Boston will come to nothing if people aren't drawn back to the city.

There is plenty that could be done by the Legislature, which has shown little inclination to ease the restrictions it has imposed on Boston public education.

And with the proper advances, the planners of the New Boston, the mayor, redevelopment administrator, might be inclined to send their children to the public schools.

As important as a place to live and work, Bostonians of the present and the promised bright future will want a place where their children can go to good schools, learn and be ready to compete in a dramatically exploding population.

The idea of a New Boston often embraces the notion of this city's history as a rich foundation on which to build.

This history applies equally to its schools. For the first public school in continuous existence in America is Boston Latin School (1635).

The first public school supported by direct taxation was at "Tomsons Island," Dorchester (1639).

The first compulsory school law was passed in this state in 1647.

Boston had a big head start and stayed out in front for three centuries, but the public school system today shows obvious signs of age.

The challenge now is as new as it was in colonial Massachusetts. The urban challenge of the 1960's is something never seen by man before—it is to a large degree unexplored territory.

To meet this test, Boston must again become a pioneer in public education.

END OF SERIES